

Tafsir

Ishrāq Al-Ma`āni

Vol. I

(Surah Al-Fātiha', Al-Baqarah, Āl -Imrān)

(Surah no. 1-3)

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

Surah¹Al-Fatihah²

(The Opening)

Makkan³7 verses⁴**Merits of the Surah**

a) Abu Sa'id al Mu'alla reported, as in *Bukhari*:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ بْنِ الْمُعَلَّى قَالَ كُنْتُ أَصَلِّي فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَدَعَانِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمْ أَجِبْهُ فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي كُنْتُ أَصَلِّي فَقَالَ أَلَمْ يَقُلْ اللَّهُ { اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ } ثُمَّ قَالَ لِي لِأَعْلَمَنَّكَ سُورَةً هِيَ أَعْظَمُ السُّورِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَخْرُجَ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ ثُمَّ أَخَذَ بِيَدِي فَلَمَّا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَخْرُجَ قُلْتُ لَهُ أَلَمْ تَقُلْ لِأَعْلَمَنَّكَ سُورَةً هِيَ أَعْظَمُ سُورَةٍ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَالَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ هِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْهُ

“I was in Prayers when the Prophet called me. I did not reply. I went to him after I had finished praying. He asked me, ‘What prevented you from answering me?’ I said I was in Prayers. He said, ‘Has not Allah said in the Qur’ān (8: 24): *Believers, respond to Allah and the Messenger when he calls you unto that which will give you life?*’ Then he said, ‘(Tarry along and) before you leave the mosque I will tell you about the most im-

portant *surah* of the Qur’ān.’ When he began to stroll out with his hand in mine, I reminded him of his promise. He said, ‘Yes. It is the *Al Hamd*, the *Sab’ al Mathani*, and the *Qur’ān al ‘Azim* which I have been given.’”

b) The following is in the *Sahihayn*:

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ كُنَّا فِي مَسِيرٍ لَنَا فَتَزَلْنَا فَجَاءَتْ جَارِيَةٌ فَقَالَتْ إِنَّ سَيِّدَ الْحَيِّ سَلِيمٌ وَإِنَّ تَقَرْنَا غَيْبٌ فَهَلْ مِنْكُمْ رَاقٍ فَقَامَ مَعَهَا رَجُلٌ مَا كُنَّا نَأْبُهُ بِرُفْقَةٍ فَرَقَاهُ فَبَرَأَ لَهُ بِثَلَاثِينَ شَاةً وَسَقَانَا لَبَنًا فَلَمَّا رَجَعَ قُلْنَا لَهُ أَكُنْتَ تُحْسِنُ رُفْقَةً أَوْ كُنْتَ تَرْفِي قَالَ لَا مَا رَفِيتُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ الْكِتَابِ قُلْنَا لَا تُحَدِّثُوا شَيْئًا حَتَّى نَأْتِيَ أَوْ نَسْأَلَ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَلَمَّا قَدِمْنَا الْمَدِينَةَ ذَكَرْنَاهُ لِلنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ وَمَا كَانَ يُدْرِيهِ أَنَّهَا رُفْقَةٌ أَقْسِمُوا وَاضْرِبُوا لِي بِسَهْمٍ.

Abu Sa'id al Khudri says: “A woman came to us when we halted at a place during a journey. She said: ‘Our chief has been stung by a scorpion and our men are away. Is there anyone amongst you who can treat him with a charm?’ One of our men about whom we did not know he

worked with charms went up and treated the man with some spell words. He was cured and gifted us 30 goats. He also sent us some milk. When he returned, we asked the man (somewhat accusingly), 'Are you an expert at charms or are you are a practitioner?' He said, 'No, I merely treated him with the *Umm al Kitab*.' We said, 'Let us not talk about it until we have seen the Prophet or have asked him.' When we were back in Madinah and mentioned the affair to him he said, 'How did the man know that it works as a charm also? Divide the goats among yourselves and allot me a share.'" (Ibn Kathir)

Abu Da'ud has another version which says that the man treated him with *surah al Fatihah* for three consecutive days, during which he would recite the *surah* on him and then, gathering his spittle, spit on him. (This author has witnessed a successful Muslim charmer spit powerfully, as if on a real visible enemy).

The report also adds that when consulted, the Prophet (*saws*) said: "You earned (the goats) with a permissible charm."

`Azim Abadi quotes from *Mirqat al Qari*: "This proves that it is allowed

to charge fee for (Islamically legal: Au.) charms" (*`Awn al Ma`bud*).

c) Imām Ahmad and Tirmidhi (who classified the report as *Hasan Sahih*), have recorded that when on one occasion Ubayy b. Ka'b read this *surah* to the Prophet he remarked:

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا أُنْزِلَتْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ
وَلَا فِي الزَّبُورِ وَلَا فِي الْفُرْقَانِ مِثْلُهَا

"By Him in whose hands is my life, *Tawrah*, *Injil*, *Zabur* and *Al Furqan*, none of them have an equivalent of this *Surah*" (Ibn Kathir).

1. In its origin, the word *surah* stands for height, elevation (Majidi). The present divisions or chapters of the Qur'an have been so called perhaps because they raise the reader from one stage (of knowledge and spiritual advancement) to another (higher) stage (Qurtubi).

The word is also used for the walls or fortifications of a city which is perhaps another reason for this usage since each *surah* encompasses many *ayat* (verses of the Qur'an) within itself (Majidi), and guards them from spilling into other parts of the Qur'an. The Qur'an has 114 chapters and the present arrangement, obviously mechanical, is *tawqifi* (توقيفي),

i.e., ordered by the Prophet himself, who was, in all such matters, acting under Divine guidance. The arrangement therefore cannot be altered. The '*suwar*, (plural of *surah*), as also each verse with those that precede or follow, have a subtle relationship with each other in their present order and need a penetrating mind to unravel their interconnection. Imām Razi and Thanwi paid attention to explaining the relationship.

2. The names of the chapters are also "*tawqifi*."

This *surah al Fatihah* has many other names of which at least two are commonly mentioned: *Umm al Qur'ān*, and *Sab' al Mathani*.

As for the names of the chapters, sometimes they bear relationship with the theme and contents of the chapters, but sometimes they do not. Often a word of the *surah* has been picked out as its name, e.g., *Al Baqarah*.

3. That is, it was revealed during the Makkan period and not necessarily in Makkah. There is no consensus among the scholars over many of the chapters whether they are Makkan or Madinan. Even when there is consensus, not the whole *surah* can be said to be certainly of this or

that period. For, both the Makkan and Madinan chapters can contain a verse or more of the other period. Further, there are certain verses that were revealed twice: once during the Makkan and again during the Madinan period. There are possibilities of certain chapters also having been revealed twice. In fact, about this chapter itself, a second opinion is that it was revealed a second time at Madinah (Qurtubi).

Marked differences in language, style, diction and subject matter can be noticed between those passages that were revealed before *hijrah* and those after. However one cannot work the other way round and treat the differences as criteria to decide if certain verses are Makkan or Madinan, or fix the meaning in their light: a mistake often committed by contemporary commentators. Only those parts of the Qur'ān are for certain Makkan or Madinan that have an Authentic report in support. Where such reports do not exist, it is anybody's guess. Further, even with a firm report about the period of revelation, it is very difficult to establish whether a particular portion was revealed during the 'early', 'middle' or 'last' days of the Makkan or Madinan period. Trying to fix up the period of revelation in such cases

I SEEK ALLAH'S REFUGE FROM SATAN⁵ THE ACCURSED⁶

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

therefore can have its basis only in conjectures. However, since religion cannot be based on conjectures, it is best to avoid such exercises. Again, analogies such as: "Since the verses under discussion are Makkan, and since such and such 'are' the subject matter of the Qur'ān of the Makkan period, this is the kind of meaning that can be deduced from these verses," are invalid. Where found, it can only betray pre conceived ideas (Au.).

4. *Ayah* in the original (the smallest unit of a *surah*) stands for a sign or miracle: as if every verse of the Qur'ān is a sign of Allah (*swt*) and a miracle in itself. A word of the original, for instance, forgotten by one who knows the whole verse by heart cannot be substituted with an equivalent word to complete the verse, without he himself feeling that it is unlike the original in structure and meaning.

As the chapters, the present arrangement of the verses is also *tawqifi*. The Prophet (*saws*) used to dictate the verses in this order, recite them (in and out of Prayers) in this order, as well as recite the whole of the Qur'ān

once in a year to Jibril in the month of Ramadan in the same order (Au.).

The total number of verses in the Qur'ān is six thousand two hundred and odd: there being some differences over the count. (*Manahil al 'Irfan*) Majid mentions on the Authority of *Al-Itqan fi 'Uuom al-Qur'ān* that they total 6,616. Of words, he gives the total as 77,934, of the letters as 323,760, drawing attention to the pains the lovers of the Qur'ān have borne with pleasure.

5. *Shayatin* are from the Jinn who are corporeal beings created from fire. They are endowed with reason. They multiply and grow in numbers just like other living creatures. Of the Jinn some have submitted to Allah (*swt*), others have not. Those that have not submitted are called *Shayatin* (sing. *Shaytan*). Although invisible to human eye, occasional contacts are not ruled out. According to one opinion (in *'Umdat al Qari* of Badruddin 'Ayni), they can run through the human body. The opinion itself is based on a *hadith* (Au.).

In common parlance everything that has a rebellious nature is called *Shaytan*. When 'Umar (*ra*) was given a

horse that he could not bring to control, he dismounted saying: 'You gave me a *Shaytan*' (Sabuni).

Shayatin are man's eternal sworn enemies, vowed to preventing him from regaining his lost position with his Lord, and accepting no compromise or peace deal with him. Every individual has (at least) one *Shaytan* accompanying him. Even the Prophet, on whom be peace, had one accompanying him, but Allah had subdued him to him. It is their inducements, evil suggestions and physical harm that we are taught to seek refuge from. To pronounce this formula [*al ta'awwudh* (التَّعَوُّذُ)] before every recitation of the Qur'an is, according to the majority of scholars, *Sunnah* (*Ma'arif*). It is also useful to say these words against every Satanic impulse or distraction. The following *hadith* may be noted:

عَنْ أَبِي الْعَلَاءِ أَنَّ عُثْمَانَ بْنَ أَبِي الْعَاصِ أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ: «يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ قَدْ حَالَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ صَلَاتِي وَقِرَائَتِي. يَلْبِسُهُا عَلَيَّ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «ذَاكَ شَيْطَانٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ خِنْزَبٌ. فَإِذَا أَحْسَسْتَهُ فَتَعَوَّذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنْهُ. وَانْفِلْ عَلَيَّ يَسَارِكَ ثَلَاثًا». قَالَ: فَقَعَلْتُ ذَلِكَ فَأَذْهَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَنِّي.

`Uthman b. Abi al `Aass Thaqafi says that he complained to the Prophet: 'O Messenger of Allah, Satan intervenes between me

and my Prayers confounding me in my prayer words.' The Prophet said, 'That is a Satan called Khinzab (also pronounced: Khanzab). When you feel his presence, seek Allah's refuge (i.e. say the *ta'awwudh*), and then spit three times on your left side.' `Uthman said, "I did that and Allah (*swt*) drove him away from me" (*Muslim*).

A *Muslim* must treat the *Shayatin* and their spiritual and physical harm seriously. The Prophet has said as in *Bukhari*:

عَنْ جَابِرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِذَا اسْتَجَنَحَ اللَّيْلُ أَوْ قَالَ جُنَحَ اللَّيْلِ فَكُفُّوا صَبِيَانَكُمْ فَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ تَنْشِيرُ حِينِيذٍ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ سَاعَةٌ مِنَ الْعِشَاءِ فَخَلُّوهُمْ وَأَغْلِقْ بَابَكَ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَأُطْفِئْ مَصْبَاحَكَ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَأَوْكْ سِقَاءَكَ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَخَمِّرْ إِنَاءَكَ وَادْكُرْ اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ تَعَرَّضُ عَلَيْهِ شَيْئًا.

Jabir reports the Prophet: "When the night begins to spread (its darkness) .. get your children indoors, for the *Shayatin* spread out at that time. But after the nightfall they may go out. And, when you close your door, remember Allah; when you put off the lamp, remember Allah; when you seal the water-skin, remember Allah; when you seal a jar, remember

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE KIND, THE COMPASSIONATE⁷

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Allah – even if you have to place something on its mouth.”

Kalbi comments: “There are four things that distract a man from Allah: Satan, the self, the world, and the people. The defense against ‘Satan’ is in seeking Allah’s refuge and in opposing every suggestion made by him; against the ‘self’ in treating it harshly; against the ‘world’ in indifference (to its pains and pleasures); and against the ‘people’ in withdrawal.”

The *Bible* has a curious formula for driving away the demons. It says (Tobit 6: 16, 17):

“... you shall take live ashes of incense and lay upon them some of the heart and liver of the fish, so as to make a smoke. Then the demon will smell it and flee away, and will never again return” (Au.).

6. The word in its origin refers to one who has been stoned. In the abstract sense it means one who has been banished from Allah’s mercy, or, more generally, accursed.

7. That this formula, known as the basmalah (بِسْمَلَة), is a verse of the Qur’ān there can be no difference of

opinion, in view of the verse 30 of al Namal. But whether it is part of every *surah* with which it opens (except for a solitary exception), is disputed. In any case, saying the basmalah before recitation of the Qur’ān is *Sunnah*. Further, coming as it does, here at the beginning of the Qur’ān it sets right man’s relationship with Allah (Sayyid Qutb).

Its meaning is: ‘I begin (this act) in the name of Allah, dependent on Him, placing trust in His Mercy, seeking His help for its completion and aiming to win His approval.’ A report as found in the *Sahih* of Muslim says:

عَنْ عُثْمَانَ بْنِ أَبِي الْعَاصِ التَّفَفِيِّ أَنَّهُ شَكَاَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- وَجَعًا يَجِدُهُ فِي جَسَدِهِ مُنْذُ أَسْلَمَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- « ضَعْ يَدَكَ عَلَى الَّذِي تَأَلَّمُ مِنْ جَسَدِكَ وَقُلْ بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ. ثَلَاثًا. وَقُلْ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ وَقُدْرَتِهِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا أَجِدُ وَأُحَازِرُ. »

‘Uthman b. Abi al ‘Aas complained of a pain he felt in his body since the day he embraced Islam, the Prophet (*saws*) told him: “Place a hand on the spot where you feel the pain and say ‘*bismillah*’ three times and then follow up by saying seven times:

[1] (All) praise belongs to Allah⁸ the Sustainer⁹ of the Worlds,¹⁰

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١﴾

أَعُوذُ بِعِزَّةِ اللَّهِ وَقُدْرَتِهِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا أَجِدُ وَأُحَازِرُ.

“I seek refuge with the Might and Power of Allah from what I find and what I am fearful of.” (Qur-tubi).

Majid says: “Contrast with this unreservedly monotheistic introductory formula of Islam the glaringly polytheistic introductory formula of Christianity: ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’”

8. Allah: “According to the best Authorities is a proper noun par excellence without derivation, from which no plural can be formed. It denotes none but the One Unique God, the Absolute, Supreme, Tender, Mighty, Gracious, Benign and Compassionate” (Majid).

He it is, with all His qualities and attributes, who is in the minds of two persons when they speak to each other about Him, even if they happen to be of different faiths and holding corrupt concepts about Him. A Christian may say that he believes in a God who is a third of the Trinity, or the atheist that there is no such reality as God. But when the two use

the word, they both mean the One, the Supreme, who has no partners in his Being or in His attributes Allah of Arabic. In other words, Allah is in the subconscious of every human being and not ‘God’ of English or its equivalent in other languages. The word therefore cannot be translated, although it may be convenient to use the word ‘God’ at some places, especially when it is the unbelievers who speak out His name.

9. “*Al Rabb*”: Sustainer is a poor substitute for this word since in Arabic it signifies (Majidi), a being who creates a thing and then develops it gradually, in steps, until it has achieved its optimum development.

Asad writes: “The Arabic expression rabb embraces a wide complex of meanings not easily expressed by a single term in another language. It comprises the ideas of having a just claim to the possession of anything and, consequently, Authority over it, as well as of rearing, sustaining and fostering anything from its inception to its final completion.”

10. “*`Aalamun*” is plural of the collective noun `alam, of which itself no singular form is available. It is de-

rived from *`alamah* (which means a sign) since *`aalam* signifies that there is a Creator who brought it in being (Sabuni).

There are various opinions about the connotation of the term *`alamun*. But they all lead to the same meaning. The opinion of Ibn `Abbas is that it is the worlds of the jinn and mankind that have been alluded to. Abu Sa'id al Khudri said: 'There are forty thousand worlds of Allah's creation. Our world, from one end to the other, is one of them.' Qatadah says: 'It includes all that there is apart from Allah' (Qurtubi). Yusuf `Ali says: 'There are many worlds astronomical and physical worlds, worlds of thought, spiritual worlds, and so on. In every one of them God is all in all.'

Another possible allusion could be to the seven firmaments (or universes) that Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an.

Finally, as we all know, everyone lives in a world of his own (Au.).

Any praise that is ever sung, whether for Allah (*swt*) or for anyone else, belongs in reality to Allah. Who is it but He who makes the idea click in the mind of an inventor? Who is it but He who steers the brush strokes

of a painter? Who is it but He who flashes the right word in the mind of a writer? And whose creation it is but His, the material that they use, the laws they follow and the beauty that they imitate? In practice, therefore, when anything strikes us as good and beautiful, it is Allah (*swt*) who must be remembered with gratitude and it is He who must be praised.

`A'isha (*ra*) says that when a pleasant thing happened to the Prophet (*saws*) he would say (Ibn Majah):

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي بِنِعْمَتِهِ تَتِمُّ الصَّالِحَاتُ

'Praise be to Allah by whose favor good things come to an agreeable end.'

But when it was unpleasant he would say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ. (في الزوائد: إسناده صحيح، ورجاله ثقات).

'Praise be to Allah at all events.'

A *hadith* (Ibn Majah) says that the best of dhikr is (the words):

لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

'There is no deity but Allah,' and the best of supplication (the words):

الحمد لله

‘All praise to Allah.’

In another *hadith* Rifa`ah b. Rafe` al Zuraqi reports (*Bukhari, Muslim* and others): “One day we were offering Prayers behind the Prophet. When he raised himself from the bow (*ruku`*) he said:

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمَدَهُ

‘A praise (that is) lavish, good and blessed.’

A man at the rear responded with:

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ - فَلَمَّا انْصَرَفَ قَالَ مَنْ الْمُتَكَلِّمُ قَالَ أَنَا قَالَ رَأَيْتُ بِضْعَةَ وَثَلَاثِينَ مَلَكًا يَبْتَدِرُونَهَا أَيُّهُمْ يَكْتُبُهَا أَوَّلُ

‘O our Lord! To You is the praise due in words and measure that befit Your Glory and the greatness of (Your Person).’

When the Prayer was over, the Prophet enquired who the man was. ‘It was me,’ the man said. The Prophet said: ‘I saw upwards of thirty angels vying to write down those words before the others would.’”

Another *hadith* (as in *Musnad Ahmad*) says the Prophet told them on that occasion that having taken it to the ‘*Arsh*, the two scribe angels were in confusion as to how to write down

these words. Allah told them, “Write them down the way My slave said.” (Ibn Kathir: Ibn Majah).

“*Lord of the Worlds*”: That is, the God of Islam is ‘not a tribal deity, nor the national God of any specially favored race or people, nor yet the narrow ‘Lord of the Hosts’, or the anthropomorphic ‘our Father in heaven’ (Majid).

He is not even the Lord of the Muslims in any specific sense, nor is He the Lord of those alone who believe in Him. He is the Lord of everyone and everything. He is the Creator, the Sustainer and the Nourisher of all: believers in Him and the unbelievers alike. He is the Lord, both of the worlds known to Man, as well as those not known to him. He is the Lord of the organic matter as well as the inorganic, of all times, past, present and future.

Also, He is not the God of Aristotle who created the world but has lost interest in its affairs (*Sayyid*), letting it run on its own by the first motion that He gave it. Rather, He drives it the whole as well as its every element on to a designed course, following a certain Plan which itself is determined by His boundless Wisdom. At our level, what else can we do but to offer praises to Him for the intri-

[2] *The Compassionate, the Merciful.*¹¹

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢﴾

cacy of the design, the delicacy of the balance and the beauty of the execution?! It is only one Allah who can do that. If there were many, the universe would fall apart (Au.).

Manazir Ahsan Geelani (an Indian scholar) has stated in his “*The Spiritual Cosmos*” that far from an actual world (of matter and spirit), even an imaginary one cannot remain intact without a sustainer paying constant attention to it. If you imagined, e.g., ‘Australia’ in your mind, with all its cities, people, mountains, lakes and deserts, then this Australia of your imagination will exist in your mind so long as you keep paying attention to it. If you did not, it will fall apart. What do you think of the actual world then? Can it last without a *Rabb al `alamīn*?

According to some scholars, this verse is of greater merit (*afdal*) than the *kalimah* since it embodies both the unity of Allah as well as His praise (Qurtubi).

Qurtubi reports about Junayd that when someone said *al hamdulillah* before him he told him to complete it and say *al hamdulillahi rabbi `al*

alamīn. The man protested, “But (of) whatever (worth) is the *`alamīn* that I should mention it along with the name of the Lord?” Junayd replied: “Brother! When both the created and the Creator are mentioned together, the ‘created’ will have no unwholesome effect on your heart.”

Razi writes, in effect: “If you pondered over the wonders of the living and the non living, (how they are interrelated and supported by each other), you will begin to see a little of the ‘Compassion’ of our Lord at work in His creation, and in the various forms His ‘sustenance’ takes. It is then that a drop from the ocean of the meaning of the phrase, ‘All praise to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,’ will you have obtained.”

“Strange it is,” he adds a little further, “that Allah has other creations besides you. Whereas, you have no Sustainer besides Him. Yet He looks after you as if He has no other creation besides you; while you serve Him as if you have many other sustainers besides Him!”

11. Thus, the primary relationship of man with his Lord is that of mercy

from His side. A *hadīth* of Muslim says,

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
«لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ، كَتَبَ فِي كِتَابِهِ، فَهُوَ عِنْدَهُ
فَوْقَ الْعَرْشِ: إِنَّ رَحْمَتِي تَغْلِبُ غَضَبِي».

“When Allah had brought the creation into existence, He wrote in His Book, which is with Him above the *ʿArsh*, ‘Surely, My mercy shall overcome My anger’” (Au.).

Both *Al Rahman* and *Al Rahim* have been derived from the same root *rahmah* and both can be translated as the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Kind, etc. Nevertheless, whatever word is chosen the translation will remain inaccurate. The words are intensive forms and, although the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, the Most Kind etc. would be more appropriate rendering; but, despite that, such a rendering will not be faithful to the original since the two can not be distinguished. For, although both are intensive forms, *Al Rahman* follows the pattern that indicates intensity of a quality, but not necessarily its permanence, while *Al Rahim* follows the pattern that indicates intensity as well as permanence.

Kaslan (كَسْلَان), for instance means “very lazy,” *taʿban* (تَعَبَان) means

“very tired,” *ghadban* (غَضِبَان), “very angry,” etc. But a person who is very lazy can become active, the very tired can regain his vigor, and the very angry will cool down to his normal temper. The forms do not promise permanence of qualities. This is applicable to the term “*Al-Rahman*” also.

In contrast, the other form indicates permanence in the quality while also expressing intensity, though not of the same order *baligh* (بَلِغ) for instance is someone who is very eloquent and whose quality of eloquence is permanent. *Shajiʿ* (شَجِيع), “courageous” is so called because his quality of courage is permanent. If it was not, he would not be called *Shajiʿ*.

Now, Allah (*swt*) is *Al Rahman*, the compassionate whose compassion is soaring. Yet, His being ‘*Al Rahman*’ does not mean that His compassion will come down to the state of not being compassionate at some time in the future; for He is also ‘*Al Rahim*’ whose quality of compassion will not suffer any decline. In other words, ‘*Al Rahman*’ indicates that He is One whose Mercy is in a state of eruption, while ‘*Al Rahim*’ indicates that this state is permanent.

Shanqiti states an additional connotation: “*Al Rahman* expresses the quality of mercy that encompasses all creatures in this world: the believers as well as the unbelievers. In contrast, *Al Rahim* is a quality that will be manifest in the Hereafter in favor of the believers alone. This is the opinion of the majority of scholars. What is reported of Jesus Christ, on whom and on our Prophet be peace, also corroborates this meaning. He is reported to have said: “*Rahman* is the *Rahman* of the next world as well as of this. *Rahim* is the *Rahim* of the Hereafter.

(It might be noted however, that the above is not a *hadīth*: Au.).

The doubt over the terms *Al Rahman* and *Al Rahim* seem to be old. Al Tabari clarifies: “Now, if someone objects that if both *Rahman* and *Rahim* are derived from the same root *rahmah*, (and since both carry the same meaning), what was the point in the repetition? The answer is that the matter is not as he imagines. Rather, each of these two words has a specific connotation that is not carried by the other.”

Ibn al-Qayyim advances another explanation, as quoted in Manar I. 48 and cited by Asad: “The term *Rahman* circumscribes the quality of

abounding grace inherent in, and inseparable from, the concept of Allah’s Being, whereas *rahim* expresses the manifestation of that grace in, and its effect upon, His creation in other words, an aspect of His activity.”

Sayyid Qutb comments: “The God of Islam does not pursue the humans of His creation with spite and anger, like the gods of Olympia in their violent outbursts, as portrayed by the Greek mythologists; nor does He play vengeful tricks on them as portrayed by the scribes of no less mythological Old Testament, an example of which is the story (of the Tower of Babel) narrated in the *Torah*.”

[The story of the Tower of Babel to which Sayyid Qutb refers is in Genesis, Chap. 11, verses 1-9. It is as follows:

“Now the whole earth had one language and few words, And, as men migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest

[3] Lord of the Day of Judgement.¹²

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٣﴾

we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’ So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth”: Au.].

“In contrast, the presence of these attributes in the basmalah and at the beginning of the opening chapter sets right the relationship of man with God. Is God the Omnipotent Creator and man the weak creature who must quietly submit and suffer this life? Is God the Law Maker whose natural laws work blindly with regard to him, taking no account of his hopes, fears and aspirations? Is

God the ruthless Judge who does not differentiate between the sinner and the rebellious? Yes, the God of Islam is the Omnipotent Creator, the Law Maker, the Judge. But He is, first and foremost, “The Kind and The Merciful.” Says a well known *hadith*: “When Allah had brought into being His creations, He wrote down in His Book, which lies with Him on the ‘*Arsh*: ‘My Mercy will overcome My Anger.’”

Sayyid’s comment ends here.

12. “*Deen*” has several meanings. That of: religion, civil laws, obedience, etc. Here it signifies “rewards and punishments, or simply retribution.” The Qur’ān says elsewhere (51:6):

وَأَنَّ الدِّينَ لَوَاقِعٌ

‘The day of Reckoning is to befall indeed.’

And a *hadith* – treated as Hasan by Tirmidhi - says:

عَنْ شَدَّادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ الْكَفِيسُ مَنْ دَانَ تَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ أَتَمَّ تَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَتَمَكَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ - قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ (سنن الترمذي)

[4] You alone do we worship,¹³ and Your help alone do we seek.¹⁴

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٤﴾

“Wise is the man who subjects himself to account (before he is questioned), and who works (now) to face what is to happen after death. And the truly incapacitated is one who follows his base desires while pinning good hope on Allah.”

Note the use of the word (دان) in this *hadith*.

The statement that He is the Lord of the Day of Judgment does not of course imply that He is not (the whole and sole) Lord of the worlds now. The Day of Judgment has been specifically mentioned because His absolute lordship will be apparent to everyone that day when no one else will possess lordship besides Him to any degree. The *Sahihayn* report:

(عن) عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَطْوِي اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ يَأْخُذُهُنَّ بِيَدِهِ الْيُمْنَى ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَتَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ أَتَيْنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ ثُمَّ يَطْوِي الْأَرْضِينَ بِشِمَالِهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ أَتَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ أَتَيْنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ (صحيح مسلم)

“On the day of Standing, Allah will fold the heavens and them take them by the right Hand and proclaim: ‘I am the King. Where

are the tyrants?’ Then He will fold the earths in his left Hand and say, ‘I am the King, where are the kings of the earth? Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant ones?’” (Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds: “(It is on the Day of Judgment) when His sovereignty shall be more evident than ever, and manifest even to the worse scoffers. The verse completely repudiates the Christian doctrine that Christ, not God, would be judge: ‘For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son’ John 5:22”.

To mention the Day of Judgment after the attributes *Al Rahman* and *Al Rahim* is perhaps to remind man that although Allah is Kind and Merciful, He has also to be just with all of His creations. Accordingly, He has appointed a Day when everyone will have to recompense for the wrongs he committed to others and draw retribution for the wrongs he suffered at the hands of others (Au.).

13. “*Ibadah*” in Arabic is any act that suggests extensive humility and self abasement (Sabuni). Accordingly, tariq mu`abbad is that path which

[5] *Guide us*¹⁵ *unto the straight path,*¹⁶

اهدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٥﴾

is well trodden, and *ba`eer mu`abbad* is a tamed camel.

In Islamic terminology it signifies deep feelings of love, humility, and fear. The meaning of the verse therefore is: ‘We worship none but You, and place our trust in none but You.’ The whole of the religion of Islam revolves around these two principles, the former negates any association with Allah (*shirk*) while the latter signifies trust and dependence on none other than Him (Ibn Kathir).

14. The meaning attributed to Ibn `Abbas however is that ‘We worship none but You, and seek Your help alone in the execution of our acts of obedience as well as in all our other activities’ (Ibn Jarir).

Ibn al-Qayyim says that the first half of the verse is related to the *uluhiyyah* aspect of Allah (*swt*) while the second to the *rububiyyah* aspect. He defines “the best act of worship” at any particular moment as that activity which aims at pleasing Allah (*swt*) and is the precise demand of the moment. It can be jihad, Prayers, attending to guests ... it can be anything, depending on the circumstances in which one finds himself.

Going back to the verse we can also say that it warns both of overt as well as covert association (*shirk*) with Allah. The first part: “*We worship none but You,*” negates open association (*shirk al jaliyy*) such as to ascribe partners to Allah’s Person; while the second: “*We seek Your help,*” negates any secret association (*shirk al khafiyy*), such as to imagine that others also have a say in the affairs of the world (Au.).

The use of plural forms in the verbs in this verse and in the following is suggestive of the fact that even if a *Muslim* is individually engaged in the acts of worship, he remains strongly tied to the bonds of the community (Majidi).

15. After the praise and promise comes the supplication: “*Guide us to the Straight Path.*” What is the meaning of the words ‘Guide us’ here, when said by those who already believe? It is: “Grant us steadfastness” (Ibn Jarir). A *Muslim* is, at all times and in all situations, in need of Allah’s help in remaining steadfast on the Path of Allah (*swt*), in firmly establishing himself on it and in continuing with determination (Ibn Kathir).

It includes an understanding (*ma'rifah*) of the Path and perseverance in it, since the two are fruits of Allah's guidance, His attention and His kindness (Sayyid).

Ihdina has much wider significance than 'showing the way.' What the supplicant is asking for is not merely that the way be pointed out or verbally indicated to him, but that he may be, by the Divine grace, actually led on to his goal, the Guide, as if, accompanying the guided and leading him on and on' (Majid).

Ibn Qayyim adds: "*Hidayah* has another function: It is to be led to Paradise on the Day of Judgment."

In other words, it is *tawfiq* (divine inducement, or inclination to submit oneself to a greater degree and depth, and grant of power to do that), which is sought along with the delineation of the path that will finally lead to Paradise. It can be added that as a rule, when a man follows up with a good deed after the previous one, it is a sign that he has been granted *tawfeeq*, and (Thanwi, elsewhere), that the previous one was accepted by Allah.

Hidayah:

Imām Raghīb al Asfahani has defined the term well in his '*Mufradat al Qur'an*.' It can be rendered in modern terms in the following manner: There are four kinds and levels of guidance. One which has been given to all the creations of Allah: the inanimate objects (such as the mountains, rivers, stars, galaxies, atoms, radio waves, physical laws, etc.: Au.), beings incapable of reasoning (such as the animals, viruses, plants, organic matter, etc.), and the rational beings such as mankind and the jinn. All these obey Allah (*swt*) by doing what fulfills the purpose of their creation, following the laws to which they are bound, and (in the case of the living) following the instinct they have been given to preserve and multiply. In this sense they are all on a *Hidayah*, although it is a low level of *Hidayah*. The Qur'an says (87: 1 3):

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى وَالَّذِي
قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى

"Magnify the Name of your Lord the Most High, who created and shaped. He who proportioned and then 'guided.'"

At another place it said (20: 49, 50):

قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يَا مُوسَى. قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

"(Fir`awn said), 'Who is the Lord of you two, O Musa?' He replied, 'Our Lord is the one who created everything and then guided it.'"

In both the above examples it is the first level and basic degree of guidance that has been alluded to: a guidance that no one and nothing misses.

The second kind of guidance is that which rational beings (mankind and jinn) are specially given through the Prophets in the form of the Revelations they bring from Allah (swt). Some accept this guidance, while others do not, since in this case there is no compulsion. However, if they reject it, they are not on *Hidayah* of this second kind, though, obviously, they remain living by, and following the basic level of guidance.

The third kind is that which can be described as the willingness to travel up the path, and the creation by Allah (swt) of the "means" that make it easy to act and live by His guidance. It is also known as *tawfiq*. It is obtained by accepting the guidance sent by Allah (swt) through the Prophets and making an effort to live by its dictates. The more one does that, the more of *tawfiq* does he or

she draw, with no end to the spiritual development. Conversely, the less one responds to the Call, the less *tawfiq* one receives. Faith (the second level of guidance) is the minimum requirement for drawing *tawfiq*. It is this kind of guidance or *tawfiq* that is meant in the following verses (47: 17):

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ

"Those who are guided aright, He increases their 'guidance' and gives them their piety."

And (29: 69):

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

"Those who struggle in Our cause, surely We shall 'guide' them to Our ways."

This third kind of guidance has no limits. Each 'state' leads to the next and a higher one. It is in this sense that the Prophet (saws), who was himself a guide for others, was promised further guidance on the occasion of the fall of Makkah. The revelation that came down on that occasion said (48: 1-2):

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا. لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَنُيِّمَ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا

"Surely We have given you a manifest victory, that Allah may forgive you

your former and your later faults, and complete His blessing upon you and 'guide' you on to a straight path."

But if the guidance sent by Allah through His prophets, revelations, or through other guided men is rejected, then there can be no further guidance. That is, a jump from the first to the third levels of guidance is ruled out. The Qur'an says (64: 11):

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ قَلْبَهُ

"Whoever believed in Allah, He will 'guide' his heart."

It is also said at several places (2: 64),

وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

"Allah does not guide an unbelieving people."

Finally, the fourth kind of *Hidayah* is the one by which man will be ushered into Paradise. Allah said (7: 43),

وَتَرَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ
الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا

"And We would have removed whatever was there in their hearts of ill-feeling – springs flowing beneath them – and they will say, 'Praise to Allah who guided us to this.'"

Quote from Raghib ends here.

16. "*Sirat al Mustaqim*": The consensus of the scholars is that it is "that straight path which has no twists

and bends in it" (Ibn Jarir). But there are various opinions about its exact significance here, although all opinions lead to the same meaning. 'Ali (ra) reported that the Prophet (saws) said, "it is the Qur'an" alluding to this verse. Ibn 'Abbas said it is "Islam." Abu al 'Aliyyah said that it is "(the ways of) the Prophet and his two companions, Abu Bakr and 'Umar" (Ibn Jarir). Mujahid said it is "the truth" (Ibn Kathir). Ibn Jarir sums up and says: "I believe it means, 'Help us to be steadfast with what is acceptable to You (O Allah), and motivate us to come up (whether they be words or deeds) with what You motivated those whom You favored before us.' Whoever is induced by Allah to do what He guided His favored ones to do, such as the Prophets, the '*Siddiqun*', the martyrs, and the righteous, is the guided one."

In a *hadith* reported by Al Nawwas b. Sam'an the Prophet illustrated 'the Straight Path' in the following manner:

عَنْ النَّوَّاسِ بْنِ سَمْعَانَ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا وَعَلَى جَنْبَيْهِ الصِّرَاطِ سُورَانِ فِيهِمَا أَبْوَابٌ مُفْتَحَتَةٌ وَعَلَى الْأَبْوَابِ سُتُورٌ مُرَحَّاةٌ وَعَلَى بَابِ الصِّرَاطِ دَاعٍ يَقُولُ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ادْخُلُوا الصِّرَاطَ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا وَدَاعٍ يَدْعُو مِنْ جَوْفِ الصِّرَاطِ فَإِذَا أَرَادَ يَفْتَحُ شَيْئًا مِنْ تِلْكَ الْأَبْوَابِ قَالَ وَيْحَكَ لَا تَفْتَحْهُ

[6] The path of those You have favored,¹⁷

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿٦﴾

فَإِنَّكَ إِن تَفْتَحْهُ تَلِجْهُ وَالصِّرَاطُ الْإِسْلَامُ وَالسُّورَانِ
حُدُودُ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَالْأَبْوَابُ الْمُنْتَحَةُ تَحَارِمُ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى
وَذَلِكَ الدَّاعِي عَلَى رَأْسِ الصِّرَاطِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ
وَالدَّاعِي فَوْقَ الصِّرَاطِ وَاعِظُ اللَّهِ فِي قَلْبِ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ
(مسند أحمد)

“Allah has drawn a simile: A straight path with walls on both sides. Both walls have open doors with curtains hanging over them. At the entrance to the path is a caller, saying, ‘People! Come straight along this path all of you and do not deviate.’ At the other end of the path is another caller. Whenever a man tries to open any one of the doors, he cries out, ‘Woe unto you man! Do not open that door. You will be lured into it and become obstinate.’

“The path is Islam. The walls are the lines delineating the lawful and the unlawful. The open doors are prohibitions of Allah. The caller at the entrance to the path is Allah’s Book. And the one calling out at the other end of the path is Allah’s admonisher that resides in every believer’s heart” (Ibn Kathir on the Authority of Ahmed, Tirmidhi and Nasa’i).

17. This qualifies the path that was sought earlier. And those who have been favored by Allah (*swt*) are the ones mentioned in (4: 69):

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ
وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

“Whoever obeyed Allah (*swt*) and His Messenger, will be in the company of those that Allah favored: the Prophets, the Truthful, martyrs and the righteous. And a good company they are.”

The *siddiqun* of the above verse have been identified as those who are next only to the Prophets in righteousness and elevation, who remain absolutely true to their faith in every situation and on all occasions.

Referring to this verse Ibn Jarir makes another point worth noting. He says, “In this verse is the clear evidence that the obedience that the faithful demonstrate, is not their own achievement. Rather, it is by Allah’s leave, and the *tawfeeq* granted.”

Majid has another point to state: “By qualifying the straight path in the manner done here it is being hinted that the ‘path’ is not a hypothetical, imaginary or an ideal one. Rather

[7] Not of those who earned Your anger, nor of ﴿٧﴾ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ those who lost the way.¹⁸ (Amin)¹⁹

it is a real and tangible one: one on which people have walked before and have met with success.”

Thanwi draws attention to yet another possibility: A subtle hint is hidden in the words to the effect that it is essential to seek the company of those who have been favored by Allah. Mere study of books might not be enough.

The first half of this statement corroborates the stance of Shah Waliyyullah as in his *Izaalatu al Khifa'* (vol.1) Au.

Ibn Qayyim makes his usual outstanding remark. He writes: “Since the one who is seeking the straight path is asking for a path from which many drop out, and since man loves company and fears loneliness, Allah (*swt*), while pointing out the path, has also indicated the company that he may keep. That company is no less than that of the Prophets, the Truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. And no ordinary people are these, but such as those whom Allah (*swt*) has favored. The company may be few in numbers but is great in worth as against the drop outs who

might be great in numbers but are of little worth.”

18. If the previous verse qualified the “path” in positive terms, this last verse does it in negative terms. It is not the path of those who incurred anger, nor those who lost it. Who are they? The general consensus is that the allusion is to the Jews and Christians. The Qur’ān says about the Jews (5: 60):

مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ

“He whom Allah cursed and with whom He is wroth.”

In another place it says about them (60: 13):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَوَلَّوْا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ

“Believers. Do not befriend a people with whom Allah is angry.”

About the Christians the Qur’ān says (5: 77):

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ

“Tell them (O Muhammad), ‘O people of the Book, stress not in your religion other than the truth and follow not the caprices of a people before you (i.e. the early Trinitarians) who erred before

and led many astray, and erred from the right way.'"

The same explanation has come down from the Prophet (*saws*).

روي عن عدي بن حاتم أنه قال: سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن قوله تعالى: {غير المغضوب عليهم} قال: هم اليهود {ولا الضالين} قال: النصارى (رواه أحمد والترمذي من طرق وله ألفاظ كثيرة)

`Adiyy b. Hatim said: I asked the Prophet (*saws*), about "*those who earned Allah's anger*." He replied: "It is the Jews." And what about, "*those who went astray*?" He replied, "They are the Christians" (Ibn Kathir).

Majid adds: "It is a timid philosophy that hesitates to hate and condemn the evil and the evildoer in the strongest terms."

The strong condemnation herewith is nothing new for the Jews. The New Testament records Jesus (*asws*) addressing them in words: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things."

Ibn al Qayyim again has some useful notes. He writes: "With respect to the knowledge of the Truth and deeds in its light, people can be divided into three categories: the 'favored ones' (*mun'am 'alayhim*), those

'who incurred anger' (*al-maghdubi 'alayhim*), and the 'misguided ones' (*dallin*). A man has either knowledge of the Truth, or he does not. Further, if he has the knowledge, either he lives by its demands or he does not. Thus you can have only three kinds of people and no more.

"Now, he who has the knowledge and lives by its demands is the 'favored' one. He is the one who purifies his self (ego) with useful knowledge and righteous deeds. He will prosper (91:9): '*Prosperous is he who purifies it*.' In contrast, he who has knowledge but follows his base desires is the one 'who earned the anger,' while he who is ignorant of the Truth altogether (since he lost it), is the 'misguided' one.

"It might also be noted that, 'those who earned the anger' are 'the misguided ones' too, as 'the misguided ones' are also those 'who earned the anger.' Both 'earned the anger' and both are 'misguided ones.' But the ones who refused to live by the guidance after they have received it are more deserving of anger than those who received it and then lost it. Hence the term 'those who earned the anger' has been used for the Jews, and the terms 'misguided ones' for the Christians."

19. “*aamīn*” means, “Accept it O Lord.” It is reported of the Prophet (*saws*) through Abuī Hurayrah (*ra*), that whenever he reached the last verse of *surah al Fatihah* in the Prayers, he said “*amīn*” in a voice that could be heard by those in the first row (Ibn Kathir on the Authority of Abu Da’ud and Ibn Majah). The latter adds the words, “and the mosque would reverberate with the sound” (of those in the congregation) - Sabuni.

Abu Hurayrah (*ra*) also narrates a *hadīth al qudsi* in which the Prophet said:

”قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ. وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ. فَإِذَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ: {الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ} قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: حَمَدَنِي عَبْدِي. وَإِذَا قَالَ: {الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ}. قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَتَيْتَنِي عَبْدِي. وَإِذَا قَالَ: {مَالِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ} قَالَ: حَمَدَنِي عَبْدِي (وَقَالَ مَرَّةً: قَوَّضَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي) فَإِذَا قَالَ: {إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ}. قَالَ: هَذَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ. فَإِذَا قَالَ: {اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ}. قَالَ: هَذَا لِعَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ“.

“Allah (*swt*) says: ‘I have divided the Prayers (*salah*) between Myself and My slave half and half; And My slave shall have what he asked. When he says:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Allah says, ‘My slave has praised Me.’ When he says:

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

Allah says, ‘My slave has Auded Me.’ When he says:

مَالِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

Allah says, ‘My slave has glorified Me.’ Then, when he says:

إِيَّاكَ تَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

Allah says, ‘This is between Me and My slave (i.e., My slave is making a promise. If he keeps it, the reward will be his). And for My slave is what he asked for.’ So that when the man says:

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Allah says, ‘This is for My slave, and for My slave is what he asked for” (*Muslim*)."

Tafsir Majidi draws a comparison of this chapter with the Christians’ Lord’s Prayer:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

*Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive
our debtors.
And lead us not in our temptation, but
deliver us from evil: For thine is the*

*kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen (Matthew 6: 8 13).*

The emphasis in the supplication above is, it should be obvious, on the daily bread.